

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 00379 100036Z
ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7426

UNCLAS MEXICO 00379

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION USIA, AMEMBASSY PANAMA,
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA, AMEMBASSY BRASILIA, AMCONSUL
RIO DE JANEIRO, AMEMBASSY CARACAS JAN 9, 1978,
REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION/INFO:
QUOTE:

UNCLAS MEXICO 00359

USIAC

EO 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: SENATOR BAKER'S DEPARTURE PRESS CONFERENCE

1. HERewith PERTINENT QUOTES FROM SENATOR HOWARD
BAKER'S PRESS CONFERENCE UPON DEPARTURE MEXICO CITY:

2. I FEEL THAT IT IS VITAL THAT WE HAVE THE POINT OF
VIEW OF OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES,
PARTICULARLY COUNTRIES SUCH AS MEXICO, AS THEY VIEW
THE ARRANGEMENTS THAT WILL BE DEBATED IN THE SENATE,
AS THEY WILL AFFECT THEIR INTERESTS, AND THE
INTERESTS OF THE REST OF LATIN AMERICA. IT'S MY
IMPRESSION THAT IT IS THE POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT
OF MEXICO THAT ITS POLICY TOWARDS THE PANAMA CANAL
ISSUE IS THAT THEY SUPPORT WHATEVER AGREEMENTS WILL
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PROVIDE FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE LANDS AND WATERS
OF THE AREA TO THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA AT SOME POINT,
THAT THE EXISTING TREATIES ARE A MATTER OF NEGOTIATION
BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND PANAMA AND THE QUESTIONS
OF ANY AMENDMENTS OR CHANGES TO THE TREATY ARE MATTERS
THAT ADDRESS THEMSELVES TO THE UNITED STATES AND
PANAMA AND TO WHICH MEXICO WILL NOT OBJECT OR INTERFERE

AS LONG AS IT SERVES THE GENERAL PURPOSE OF PROVIDING
IN THE FUTURE FOR THE ULTIMATE SOVEREIGNTY OF THAT
AREA FOR THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA.

3. Q: MY QUESTION CONCERNS THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY.
YOU SAID THAT ADDITIONAL GUARANTEES, AMENDMENTS, WILL
BE NEEDED FOR THE TREATY TO GET THROUGH THE SENATE.
DO YOU THINK THAT THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT SIGNED BY
CARTER AND TORRIJOS WILL BE A SUFFICIENT GUARANTEE IF
IT WERE ADDED?

4. A: AS I SAID WHEN I LEFT PANAMA, I PREFER NOT
TO SAY HOW MUCH OR HOW LITTLE WILL BE REQUIRED IN ORDER
TO GAIN PASSAGE IN THE SENATE, BUT RATHER TO SAY THAT
I'M CONVINCED NOW THAT THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF PUTTING
TOGETHER A PACKAGE OF AMENDMENTS OR RESERVATIONS
THAT MIGHT PASS THE SENATE AND WOULD NOT BE REPUGNANT
TO THE PANAMANIAN. I THINK I WOULD DESTROY ANY
CHANCE I HAVE OF TRYING TO PUT THAT PACKAGE TOGETHER
IF I DISCLOSE NOW THE RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES. I MUST
GO BACK TO WASHINGTON TO EXPLORE THAT. BUT MY OPTIMISM
IS CLEAR, I BELIEVE; I THINK THERE IS CHANCE. I DO
NOT PREDICT THAT IT WILL OCCUR BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW
YET, BUT I THINK THERE'S A CHANCE THAT WE CAN PUT
TOGETHER AGREEMENTS WHICH WOULD BE SATISFACTORY TO THE
UNITED STATES SENATE, TO THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA,
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AND IT WOULD BE ATTRACTIVE TO THE COUNTRIES
OF LATIN AMERICA IN TERMS OF OUR LONG-TERM RELATIONS.
THE CONTINUATION OF THE LADY'S QUESTION WAS,
AM I GOING TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO TRY TO DO THAT.
THE ANSWER IS YES, I AM. I INTEND TO GO BACK TO
WASHINGTON AND TO CONFER WITH MY REPUBLICAN COLLEAGUES
IN THE SENATE, I INTEND TO TRY TO IDENTIFY THEIR
REQUIREMENTS IN THAT RESPECT TO SEE HOW MUCH SIMILARITY
AND DISIMILARITY THERE MAY BE IN THEIR
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS OR RESERVATIONS. TO SEE IF A
REASONABLE PACKAGE OF ADDITIONAL GUARANTEES CAN BE
ASSEMBLED THAT WOULD BE SUPPORTED BY A
MAJORITY OR LARGE MAJORITY OF REPUBLICAN SENATORS.
IF I CAN DO THAT, IT WILL BE, I THINK, A GREAT
ACCOMPLISHMENT; IF I CAN'T DO THAT, AT LEAST I KNOW
I WILL HAVE TRIED. THANK YOU VERY MUCH. BALDYGA

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